

AFRICAN ACRONYMS
AND
ABBREVIATIONS

A HANDBOOK

DAVID E. HALL

African Acronyms and Abbreviations

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In memoriam

Paul Ansah
Kamanzi Bimanyu
Patrick Kakwenzire
Malcolm Norris

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Introduction

The primary purpose of this dictionary is to elucidate abbreviations relating to African studies.

The scope of the work is the whole of Africa including North Africa (except Egypt) and the adjacent islands including those of the Western Indian Ocean, but excluding Madeira, Malta and St Helena. This geographical coverage is the same as that of *International African Bibliography* (Hans Zell Publishers, quarterly, edited by David Hall since 1980). The abbreviations listed range in time from the last century to the 1990s. Most relate to entities in Africa or are concerned directly with it: official and unofficial bodies, political parties, educational establishments, businesses, etc. A number of entities that do not specifically relate to Africa but which constantly recur in Africanist publications are also given: international aid organizations, missions and other bodies.

The dictionary has been designed to be as international in scope as possible. Equal attention has been paid to Francophone and Anglophone Africa and as much attention to Lusophone and Afrikaans abbreviations as the shortage of available source-material allowed. Many users have to read in a language that is not their first – or in the case of many Africans not even their second – and this has been borne in mind. So far as time permitted, cross-references have been made in the case of entities that have abbreviations and expanded forms in different languages.

When the country of origin of an abbreviation is known, this has been indicated (sometimes with a query).

So far as possible, the dictionary avoids abbreviations that have been created *ad hoc* for a particular piece of writing and do not have general acceptance, and also those many phantom abbreviations that are generated by mis-keyboarding.

Where it has seemed legitimate, signs in the middle of an abbreviation (-, /, &) have been omitted in the interests of clarity. Where they have been retained they are ignored in the alphabetical order. Accents have been omitted in the abbreviations but retained in the full forms.

With a few necessary exceptions, abbreviations are given in upper case. In practice, usage for many of them fluctuates between upper and lower case.

Given limitations of time, every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the dictionary, but reservations are discussed below.

Why is such a dictionary needed?

Most dictionaries of abbreviations and acronyms pay scant attention to Africa. Moreover, Anglophone dictionaries neglect the Francophone area, and Francophone dictionaries neglect the Anglophone area, and few pay much heed to the Lusophone area. In any case, abbreviations are now so many, and proliferating so fast, that Africa deserves a dictionary to itself.

Many monograph studies now provide

lists of abbreviations used, although these are not always very accurate. But many authors use abbreviations without giving their full name, either because they assume that the reader is familiar with them or because it does not occur to them that the full names are important. Sometimes the full names are given only in easily-missed footnotes or endnotes. In other instances, although the full names may be given early in a study, few readers can remember all of them or know where to refer to them later. The same abbreviation often has different meanings – up to as many as 16 on the evidence of this dictionary. A glance at any page will illustrate this. (Curious examples are BBB and CPSA.) Even within one country one abbreviation may represent different entities. For instance, the abbreviation NPP has been used by four apparently different political parties in Ghana. New abbreviations are constantly being created.

In studying a text, a reader may pass over an unfamiliar abbreviation and contrive to understand the gist of a passage, but the passage will have gone slightly out of focus. At times it may be vital to understand an abbreviation.

It would be an excellent principle if all books, and even long articles, were provided with accurate lists of abbreviations and their meanings.

The primary sources for the dictionary are the authority-files which the compiler has maintained over 15 years of work on *International African Bibliography*, greatly supplemented more recently with cullings from books, periodicals, news-magazines and a range of reference works.

The main difficulty in compilation has been the lack of authoritative source-material.

The scant concern of very many authors for accuracy in expanding abbreviations is alarming. Indeed they can be very cavalier in assuming that their readers know the full term represented by an

abbreviation or that they, the authors, can guess it without checking. If the compiler of this dictionary has found expanded forms from two different sources, the chances are about equal that they will show a discrepancy between them. Such discrepancies frequently occur within the same work at a distance of a few pages. All this is the more astonishing in that in all but a very few cases, the official name of an entity is the full form, not the abbreviation.

The central problem of compilation has turned out to be the welter of conflicting information, not only in details such as apostrophes and prepositions, but in more serious discrepancies concerning the key words.

There are no certain sources of information. Reference works differ greatly in standards of accuracy (a glance at the standard of their French and Portuguese grammar and orthography is often enough to warn one). The only fairly certain source of information is a publication by the body concerned, and even then it is not unknown for such a publication to give two different interpretations of its own abbreviation.

Of the few large reference-works drawn upon by the compiler, three merit special attention for their fullness and general accuracy: Europa Publications' annual *Africa South of the Sahara* and *The World of Learning*; and the *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa* published by Nasou Ltd (1970-76).

Although every effort, therefore, has been made to make this work as accurate as possible it cannot claim to be completely authoritative. The full expansions of the abbreviations are in substance correct but may contain minor inaccuracies in detail. This is why the beginning of this introduction stresses that the dictionary's primary purpose is to elucidate abbreviations. It would be idle, too, to claim that it is exhaustive. However, it certainly lists the most constantly recurring abbreviations

and a great many more besides. Much as it would be tempting to present it as a totally authoritative reference work, it is offered rather as a useful working tool for the reader simply puzzled by such abbreviations as ASPRO, BBC, EIER, GAN, ITMA, PSEMA, SMERT and UCAP.

Faced with a plethora of doubtful names and the need to put the work into a publishable form, the compiler has resorted to the following expedients:-

- where a single expanded form has been adopted by a clear majority of writers, improbable dissenting forms have been ignored;

- where there is more serious doubt as to the correct form, plausible alternatives have been added in brackets, thus: [or ...]; the word *alternatively* indicates a genuine alternative, usually a change of name preserving the same abbreviation (IFAN is a familiar example);

- where it has not been possible to discover even a tentative full name any information available has been noted in brackets as a gloss.

The compiler will continue to collect material to enlarge and refine this dictionary. It is too early to say whether a supplement will be published.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the Centre of African Studies, University of London, for the use of equipment and much-needed encouragement; to Professor Jacques Vanderlinden for information on many organizations of the Belgian colonies and for very properly urging the compiler to investigate further; to M. Isidore Ralaingita for correcting some Malagasy and to Miss Veronica Higgs of Mansell Publishing for her much-valued, sound advice.

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AA: (1) Acção Angolana para o Desenvolvimento; (2) African Affairs [published London]; (3) Agricultural Assistant [Zambia]; (4) Automobile Association [South Africa]; (5) Autoridades Administrativas [Mozambique]

AAA: (1) African Airlines Association = ACAA: Association des Compagnies Aériennes Africaines; (2) All Africa Agreement; (3) [glossed as: the Angolan Environmental Association]

AAAA: Arab and African Athletic Association

AAAEA: Association Africaine pour l'Alphabétisation et l'Éducation des Adultes = AALAE: African Association for Literacy and Adult Education

AAAIID: Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development

AAASA: Association for the Advancement of Agricultural Sciences in Africa = Association pour l'Avancement en Afrique des Sciences de l'Agriculture [based in Ethiopia]

AAAST: Association Africaine pour l'Avancement de la Science et de la Technologie

AAC: (1) African Accounting Association = CAC: Conseil Africain de la Comptabilité; (2) African Advisory Council [Botswana]; (3) Alexandra Action Committee [South Africa]; (4) All African Convention [South Africa]; (5) All Anglophone Conference [Cameroun]; (6) Anglo American Corporation [South Africa]; (7) Anti-Apartheid Conference

AACB: Association of African Central Banks = ABCA: Association des Banques Centrales Africaines

AACC: (1) African Agricultural Credit Commission; (2) All Africa Conference of Churches = CETA: Conférence des Églises de Toute l'Afrique; (3) Alta Autoridade contra a Corrupção [Mozambique]

AAD: Association of African Designers

AADA: Ada Agricultural Development Unit

AADFI: Association of African Development Finance Institutions = AIAFD: Association des Institutions Africaines de Financement du Développement

AAE: Association of African Economists

AAEC: Association of African Earthkeeping Churches

AAEJ: (1) American Association for Ethiopian Jewry; (2) Association des Anciens Élèves des Jésuites [Zaire]

AAES: Association Africaine de l'Énergie Solaire

AAF: African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment. Cp. also AAF-SAP

AAFBA: Association Africaine pour la Fixation Biologique de l'Azote = AABNF

AAFC: Allied Armed Forces of the Community [i.e.. of ECOWAS]

AAF-SAP: African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes [cp. AAF and AA-SAP]

AAFU: All African Farmers Union

AAGS: Association of African Geological Services = ASGA: Association des